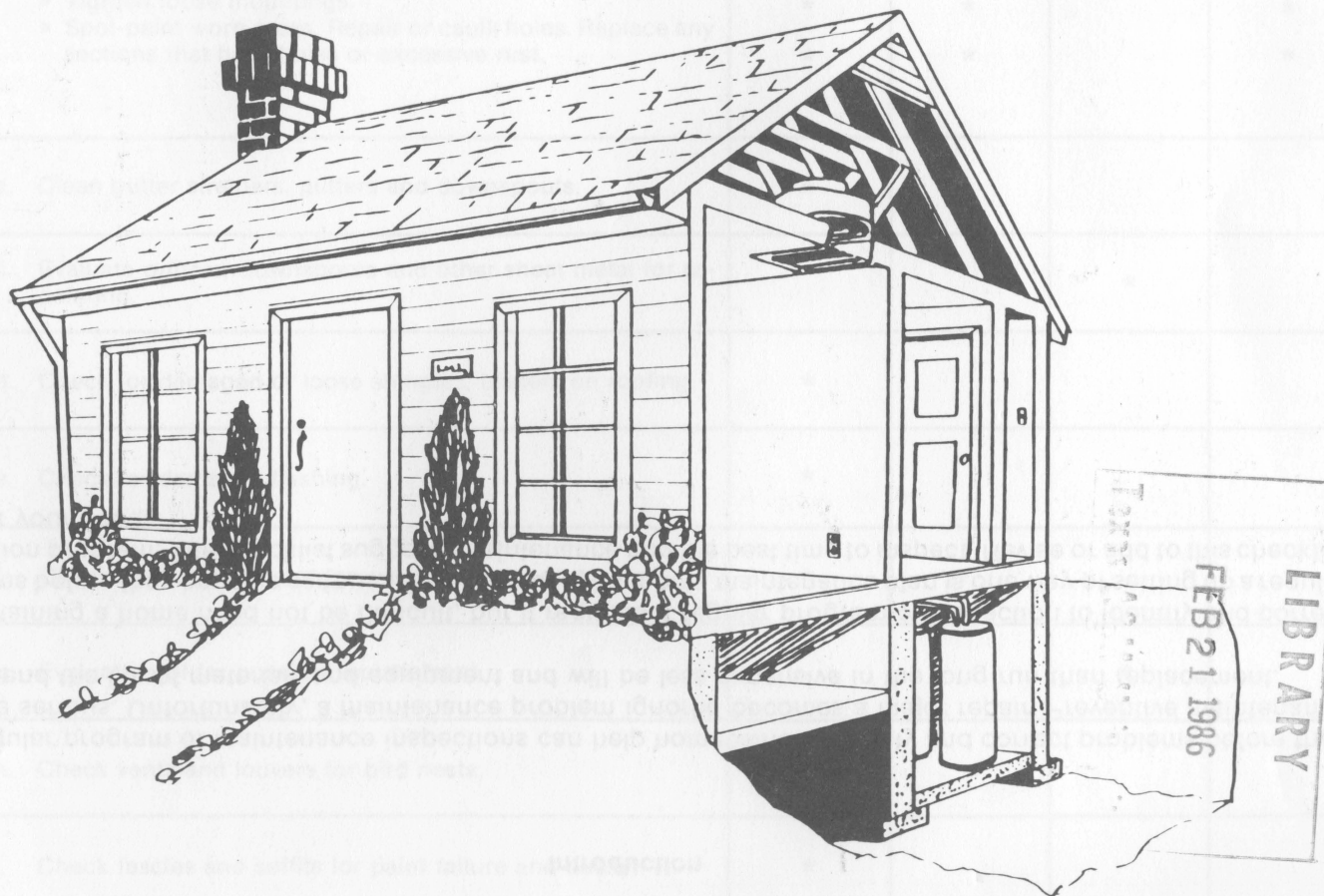


Texas Agricultural Extension Service

People Helping People

Home Maintenance Manual



Introduction

A regular program of maintenance inspections can help homeowners identify and correct problems before they become serious. Unfortunately, a maintenance problem ignored becomes a major repair. Preventive maintenance can extend the life of materials and equipment and will be less expensive in the long run than replacement.

Maintaining a home need not be difficult, but it requires a regular program of inspection to identify and correct problems before they become serious. The accompanying home maintenance plan is one way of setting up a regular inspection program. The checklist suggests maintenance and the best time to inspect. Revise or add to this checklist to meet your needs.



Home Maintenance Manual



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HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
1. ROOF				
a. Check for damaged gutters, downspouts, hangers and strain-ers. • Remove accumulated debris (use wire snake for elbows). • Check gutter alignment to be sure rainwater collects prop-erly and drains away from house. • Tighten loose mountings. • Spot-paint worn areas. Repair or caulk holes. Replace any sections that have holes or excessive rust.	* * * * *	* * * *		* * * *
b. Clean gutter strainers, gutters and downspouts.	*	*		
c. Evaluate gutters, downspouts and other sheet metal for re-painting.			*	
d. Check for damaged or loose shingles, blisters on roofing.	*			
e. Check for damaged flashing.	*			
f. Check underside of roof for water stains or dampness.	*			
g. Evaluate roof for possible replacement.			*	
h. Check vents and louvers for bird nests.	*	*		
i. Check fascias and soffits for paint failure and decay.	*			

ROOF (continued)	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
j. Check masonry chimneys. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect for soot buildup. • Inspect for creosote buildup. • Clean with chimney brushes or scrapers and vacuum cleaner before buildup reaches ¼ inch thickness. (Chemical cleaners do not replace mechanical cleaning.) • Inspect outside of chimney for loose bricks or stones and deteriorating joints. Repeat if necessary. • Check for worn flue liner or joints and for bird nests or other obstructions. 	*		*	* * (monthly)
k. Check antenna guy wires and support.			*	
2. FOUNDATION				
a. Check foundation for dampness caused by wet weather.	*		*	
b. Check grading to be sure water drains away from house.			*	
c. Inspect for signs of termite infestation.			*	
3. EXTERIOR WALLS				
a. Check siding and trim for damage or decay.	*			
b. Check painted surfaces for paint failure.	*			
c. Check masonry for cracks and loose joints.	*			
d. Check all trim for fit.	*	*		

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
4. WINDOWS AND DOORS				
a. Check doors, windows and trim for finish failure.	*			
b. Check for broken glass and damaged screens.	*			
c. Check glazed opening for loose putty.	*			
d. Clean screens.	*			
e. Check hardware; lubricate moving parts.	*	*		
f. Check weather-stripping for damage and tightness of fit.	*			
g. Check caulking at doors, windows and all other openings and joints where dissimilar materials meet.	*			
5. GROUNDS AND YARD				
a. Drain outside waterlines and hoses.		*		
b. Check driveways and walks for cracks and soil erosion.		*		
c. Check all wood for decay and termites.			*	
d. Clean and repair out-of-season equipment.				*

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
6. PLUMBING				
<p>a. Check water heater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain pailful of water to draw sediment from bottom of tank. (Open draincock at bottom of tank.) • Electric Heater: Shut off power to the heater at the fuse box or circuit before you begin. Drain tank completely to flush out scale, rust and sediment. (Attach garden hose from opened draincock to yard or cellar drain.) Remove heating elements, soak them in vinegar solution (1 cup vinegar to each gallon of water), and scrape off mineral deposits. —Manually open safety valve (temperature-pressure-relief valve) at top of tank on hot-water line to test operation: wear gloves, and use a bucket to catch the water that will come out. Be sure the valve returns to its original position. • Gas Heater: Shut off, then check exhaust vent and air shutter openings for dirt and obstructions. Inspect burner unit for dust and dirt. Clean burner of lint and dirt and vacuum air passages to burner. 		<p>*(biannually)</p> <p>*(biannually)</p>	<p>*</p> <p>*</p>	<p>*(monthly)</p>
<p>b. Check for buildup of scum and sludge in septic tank.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Septic System: Dig away ground over cover and pull up lid. Probe with long pole. —Have a professional pump out tank to clean it. Use of chemical aids does not replace pumping system regularly. 			<p>*</p> <p>*</p>	<p>*(Every 2-5 years or when sludge reaches one-third the tank's depth. Frequency depends on size of tank and household use.</p> <p>Tanks for which there is a garbage disposal need more frequent service.</p>

PLUMBING (continued)	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
c. Check all toilets for leakage.				*
d. Check faucets, hose bibbs and valves for leakage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain pipes to replace air cushion. (Close main shutoff valve for pump, open lowest and highest faucets.) • Close shutoff valves to outside faucets and waterlines: drain. 		*	*	*
7. HEATING SYSTEM				
a. Forced Hot Air Filter: Check for dust and dirt (to keep air flowing freely and to prevent airborne dirt from circulating throughout house). If metal, remove and hose off or scrub. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If disposable, vacuum once or twice, then replace. • To clean an electronic air filter, remove outer screen and inner collector plates. Wash screen in mild detergent and water. Hose off or rinse thoroughly. Clean plates with a solution of automatic-dishwasher soap and water. 				* (monthly) * (bimonthly) * (Every 2-3 months)
b. Clean and service humidifier and dehumidifier. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain. Clean water pan. • Work float arm back and forth to dislodge obstructions. • To clean water inlet of mineral buildup, ream with a piece of wire or bent clothes hanger. • Lubricate motor with a drop or two of 20-weight oil. • Be sure there is water in the reserve tank (sometimes on machine, sometimes located in attic). • Inspect plates or pads, and clean with a strong laundry detergent. Rinse. Scrape mineral deposits with a wire brush or steel wool. 		* * * * *	* * * * *	(Once a month in hard-water areas or 3 times a year in soft-water areas.)

HEATING SYSTEM (continued)	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
c. Clean dirt and dust from around furnaces, condensing unit, air grilles and ducts.	*	*		
7A. HEAT-EXCHANGE AREA AND EXHAUST				
a. Oil Furnace: Check inside of firebox for soot, debris and corrosion. (Access through furnace exhaust or inspection door above burner.) Scrub with wire brush, and vacuum out soot. (Clean carefully; soot acts as insulation and decreases heat transfer to house). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove breeching (stovepipe connecting furnace to chimney). Scrub with a wire brush and vacuum. 		* *	* *	Twice during heating season if you have a dual-fuel furnace.
b. Gas Furnace: Check flame color (should be blue with little or no yellow). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call service person for professional service. Check burners and heat-exchange areas for soot, debris and corrosion. Clean as per oil-fired heating system. Check to be sure air intakes are unobstructed. 			*	* (Every 2-3 years) * (Every 2-3 years) * (Every 2-3 years)
8. COOLING SYSTEM				
8A. AIR CONDITIONER				

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
a. Central Unit: Clean or replace filter (usually located in furnace). • Remove debris around compressor (located in outdoor cabinet), and trim any nearby shrubbery. • Flush evaporator drain line.	* * *			* * *
b. Room Unit: Clean filter (located behind air-intake grille on front). Wash in mild detergent and water, rinse and dry thoroughly (if permanent). • If disposable, replace • Remove unit from wall, and clean entire compartment: • Vacuum dust and lint from condenser and evaporator. • Wash dirt and grime from compressor, tubing, motor and blades with soap and water. • Clean leaves and debris from outside. • Straighten any bent metal fins. • Scrape off rust, reprime and paint. • Vacuum outer cabinet. • Cover with insulated dust- and moisture-proof cover, inside and out, or remove unit from wall and seal opening.	* *	*	* * * * * * *	* *
8B. WHOLE—HOUSE FAN				
a. Dislodge leaves and debris from louver pivots. • Clean fan blades. • Lubricate motor and pulley bearings with drop of oil on each pivot and oil port. • Check drive belt and replace if sides are glazed, smooth and slippery. Check tension (should deflect ½-inch when pressed in middle). Replace belt if necessary. • Seal with airtight cover and insulate.	* * * * *			
b. Remove window air conditioners during winter.		*		
c. Have entire system checked by qualified service person.	*	*		

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
9. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM				
a. Check conditions of lamp cords, extension cords and plugs. Replace these at first sign of wear or damage.	*	*		
b. Check areas where wiring is exposed. Replace at first sign of wear or damage.	*	*		
c. If you experience even a slight tingling shock from handling or touching any appliance, disconnect and repair appliance.				*
d. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, contact electrician to determine cause and make necessary repairs.				*
9A. CIRCUIT-BREAKER BOX				
a. Check that breakers are marked to correspond to rooms or appliances they service. (To check, turn on all appliances and lights, then switch off breakers one at a time.)				* (When you first move in, or now, if you have never done it)
9B. FUSEBOX				
a. Be sure fuses are correctly marked for rooms or appliances they serve. (To check, turn on all appliances and lights; disconnect fuses one at a time.)				* (When you first move in, or now, if you have never done it)
b. Keep a supply of spare fuses.				* Always

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
10. INTERIOR OF HOUSE				
a. Check all joints in ceramic tile, laminated plastic and similar surfaces. Check caulking around sinks, bathtubs and showers.	*	*		
b. Check all painted and natural finished surfaces for dirt, finish failure and needed repairs.	*			
11. SAFETY EQUIPMENT				
11A. FIRE EXTINGUISHER				
a. To inspect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check indicator on pressure gauge to be sure that extinguisher is charged. • Be sure lock pin is firmly in place and intact. • Check to be sure discharge nozzle is not clogged. • Keep extinguisher clean and check for dents, scratches and corrosion. • Do not test by partially discharging extinguisher. This will cause loss of pressure. 				* (monthly) * (monthly) * (monthly) * (monthly) * (monthly) (Inspect more often if exposed to weather)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard contents and have a professional refill unit. 				* (At least once every 6 years)

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
11B. SMOKE ALARMS				
a. Firmly press test button (should sound an alarm).				* (weekly)
b. Test with smoke source (lit cigarette or cotton cord) held 3 inches away from unit. To reduce alarm time during test, blow into unit to clear away smoke.				* (monthly)
c. To clean, remove cover by pulling steadily downward. Remove power cell. Vacuum accumulated dust from sensing chamber openings. Wash cover with soap and water. Let dry. Replace. Depress test switch.			*	
d. Replace batteries. Use only batteries specified by manufacturer. Use of a different battery may prevent alarm from working.			* (Often 9 volt) (Annually or when built-in indicator sounds "low-current" warning.)	

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
12. MISCELLANEOUS				
12A. WOOD BURNERS/FIREPLACE				
a. Check to be sure damper operates and closes fully. If fireplace has a cleanout pit at bottom of chimney, remove ashes.		*	*	
b. Check iron grates for stability.		*	*	
c. Clean inside and vacuum.				*
12B. WOODSTOVE				
a. To clean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shovel ashes and vacuum interior. 				* (Before you light first fire of the season or 3 days after last fire, allowing embers to cool thoroughly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for cracks and repair with stove cement if necessary. • Wash and rinse exterior. Dry. Repaint with high temperature stove paint if necessary. • Vacuum the blower, clean or replace filters and oil the motor. • Clean stovepipe between stove and chimney. Check stovepipe for corrosion and holes. Replace if necessary. 		*		* * * * * (Every 2 or 3 weeks if stove is used heavily. Frequency will depend on how much creosote builds up.)

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
12C. SUMP PUMP				
a. Check screen for debris or dirt. Clean if necessary.				*
b. Clean impeller. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To check switch operation, submerge pump into bucket of water or pour two buckets of water into pit. (Float should rise as water accumulates.) 				* * (Before flood season and then every 3 months)
12D. SWIMMING POOL				
a. Drain. Scrub and vacuum. Run filter continuously for 5 days.	*			
b. Clean drains.	*			
c. Check pool lights and area wiring for frayed spots or other needed repairs.	*			
d. Take sample of pool water to supply store to test for pH balance.	* (When pool is first filled)			
e. Test pH, chemical and chlorine levels with test kit (available at supply store unless pool is equipped with automatic chemical dispenser.				* (daily)

SWIMMING POOL (continued)

	Spring	Fall	Annually	As Needed
f. Dose with 1 pound calcium hypochloride per 10,000 gallons water.				* (biweekly)
g. Back-wash or hose down filters.				* (weekly)
h. Vacuum or sweep sides and bottom with pool cleaning equipment.				*
i. Cover with insulated cover.				* (When not in use.)
j. Replace vinyl liner.				* (Every 10 years.)

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